

Advisory Council to the Division of Autism Services

Minutes, May 7, 2008

MEMBERS PRESENT: Maggie Casciato, Laura Digalbo, Ruth Eren, Jan Galloway, Ann Gionet, Jacqueline Kelleher, David Daniel Klipper, James Loomis, Sara Reed, Lois Rosenwald, Jonathan Ross, Tricia Winter, Robin Wood, Elaine Flynn for Nikki Richer

OTHERS PRESENT: Kevin Lembo, Mary Franco and Jennifer Ureta

ABSENT: Cathy Adamczyk, Jennifer Carroll, Tom Coakley, Judy Dowd, Roger Frant, Chera Gerstein, Sara Lourie, Kathy Reddington, Stan Soby, Jane Thierfeld-Brown, Larry Wood

The meeting was called to order and an opportunity for public comment was given. No members of the public were present.

Announcements

Allison, from the Division of Autism Services announced the following:

- A first draft of the feasibility report for the Medicaid waiver will be completed shortly.
- Two new positions have been posted.
- The policy regarding background checks is being finalized.
- There have been some changes regarding eligibility and criteria for the pilot project (changes not specified).
- The pilot project is working on training initiatives in conjunction with BRS.

Robin Wood announced DDS workshops on transportation and employment first and gave flyers for these to the Council.

Introductions

Existing and prospective members of the Council introduced themselves.

Election of New Members

Pursuant to its bylaws, the Council elected the following new members to two-year terms: Representative Kathy Abercrombie, Kevin Lembo, and Alan Looper. The following new members were elected to one-year terms: Mary Franco and Jennifer Ureta.

Discussion of the Role of the Advisory Council

The group then engaged in a free-form discussion of the role of the Advisory Council. The following were mentioned as possible areas of focus or suggestions regarding how the Advisory Council should function:

- Review policy guidelines;

- Insurance;
- Professional/Provided Development;
- Data – Needs Assessment and Program Assessment
- Provide information for the parent community
- Housing
- It should have a task force focus rather than a permanent committee focus. Have clear goals for committees and end them when these are completed.
- Medicaid Waiver – guidelines
- Statewide Agency Coordination
- Educate Council Members

There was considerable discussion about wanting the Council to be effective and not bureaucratic. There was also discussion about what age cohorts the Council should focus on; we agreed that for the moment, adult services needed to be our primary area of focus.

The group agreed upon three areas to focus on: Data, Professional/Provider Development, and the Medicaid waiver. In keeping with the Council's desire not to necessarily create permanent committee, we decided to have each of these be an Ad Hoc Committee. After a break, the group discussed priorities and areas of focus for each of the Ad Hoc Committees.

Data Ad Hoc Committee

- Part of the Committee's function is to respond to data needs from the Medicaid Waiver and Professional/Provider Development Ad Hoc Committees. The Ad Hoc Committees will need to liaise with one another. There should be one individual whose job it is to coordinate between Data and Provider Development, and another individual whose job it is to coordinate between Data and Medicaid Waiver. Who these people would be was not determined.
- Obtain access to existing data:
 - Pilot program data
 - State Agencies: BRS, DMHAS, DDS, etc.
 - Advocacy Groups
- Evaluate reliability and consistency of data. In particular, attempt to conform data from different sources for comparability.
- Include, although perhaps not as the first task, a focus on program assessment. What outcomes have been achieved for specific dollar amounts?
- Report back to Advisory Council with scope of work and prospective first steps.
- The following members agreed to be part of this Ad Hoc Committee: Maggie Casciato, Ruth Eren, Jan Galloway, Jacqui Kelleher, and Jim Loomis. Jacqui Kelleher agreed to serve as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee.

Provider Development Ad Hoc Committee

- This Ad Hoc Committee will need to coordinate with Data and make its information needs known.
- Several members discussed the need of training with regard to the criminal justice system in light of certain individuals with ASD having encountered legal difficulties.
- Need to know the current status in CT.
- Develop plans for workforce development
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
- Educational routes
- Possibly look at other states to see if there are things we can learn.
- Finding providers.
- Approaches for training providers.
- Existing policies/guidelines?
- The following members agreed to be part of this Ad Hoc Committee: Elaine Flynn, Mary Franco, Ann Gionet, Sara Lourie, Sara Reed, Chera Gerstein and Jennifer Ureta. The names of Larry Wood and Roger Frant were suggested as possible members, with Roger being a possible chair. Ann Gionet agreed to serve as Interim Chair to coordinate initial steps for this Ad Hoc Committee.

Medicaid Waiver Ad Hoc Committee

- One key focus of the ad hoc committee will focus on its actually being implemented.
- Additionally, the ad hoc committee will examine the services included and provider qualification review.
- To the extent possible, we want to ensure that the services we want to be provided by DAS should be the priority rather than being completely driven by the funding source.
- We saw two types of functions with regard to the waiver. There should be an advocacy function – what do we want in the waiver?
- There needs to be a detail checking function – is it in there?
- Finally, we agreed that it would be appropriate for this Ad Hoc Committee to brief the Advisory Committee on the status of the waiver at the next meeting. Additionally, we will endeavor to have someone from DSS come and give the Council a basic education on Medicaid Waivers.
- Joining the committee were: Laura Digalbo, Mary Franco, Kevin Lembo, Sara Reed, Lois Rosenwald, Jennifer Ureta, Tricia Winter and Robin Wood. Kathy Reddington should also be on this Ad Hoc Committee. Laura Digalbo agreed to be the Chair.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Possible Action Items

- Develop a complete roster of Advisory Council members and circulate to the Council.
- Elaine Flynn to be given application materials for her to fill out to take Nikki Richer's place.
- Locate a speaker to brief the next meeting on Medicaid Waivers.

Preliminary Roster

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